

Top Ten Tips To Help Keep Kids Safe Online

1. Set clear, developmentally appropriate, family rules about the internet for the safety and best interest of your child. Work together to create realistic options that work for the entire family. Children should not have 24/7 access to the internet – that includes smart phone text messaging too!
2. Keep computers, laptops and other devices in a common area of the house like the kitchen. Make yourself available when your child is online, and check in regularly. Younger children should have constant supervision.
3. Do not threaten to take away the use of your child's internet-based devices but set reasonable consequences if/when your child breaks the rules. Be aware that children can easily find other ways to get online (i.e. friend's home). Children often don't tell adults about inappropriate online situations as they are worried that they will lose their device or online privileges.
4. Promote open communication about your child's online activities. Show your child you are willing to listen even if you do not have all the answers.
5. Encourage your child to come to you if they accidentally come across an inappropriate site (pornographic, violent). DO NOT overreact with anger. Instead find out how they may have found this site and teach them how to safely find what they were looking for.
6. Be tech-savvy and stay informed about the changing technology your child is using. Make use of internet safety resources like a) Media Smarts Canada b) Netsmartz parents c) common sense media for Parents d) www.thedoorthatisnotlocked.ca
7. Model the online behaviour that you expect your child to follow. Be aware of what you are posting.
8. Know your child's online friends. It is important to know who your child is speaking to online and ensure that they never meet anyone in person without you going with them.
9. Teach what you know. The internet is a new medium for traditional parenting lessons. Bullies, strangers and harsh content online **does** exist just like in the real world.
10. Explain to your child why they should not post personal information like photos, names or addresses. Teach them to think carefully about what they post because once you push send it lives in "cyberspace" forever.

In addition to keeping kids safe online, you can find supportive information on dealing with the dynamics of bullying in face to face situations at www.prevnet.ca.

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